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HVEP Committee Bills

Policy Sphere: Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Mission Guidance: Explanation of three (3) HVEP Committee Bills
Date: 05 February 2018

Veterans Legislation:

HB 4038 Purpose:

An “Omnibus Veterans’ Bill” providing a legislative vehicle for adjustments to existing programming, specifying a) authority to negotiate with US Department of Veterans Affairs for development of a Roseburg Veterans’ Home; b) authority for State/Tribal veteran cemeteries; c) authority for direct release of military medals held as state property to “next of kin” family members (absent a public auction); d) implementation of additional reentry services coordinators (for incarcerated veterans); and e) establishment of a grant-based pro bono legal services support program similar to those available for military families in most states. Note: SVEP is facilitating the “Omnibus Emergency Preparedness Bill.”

Value:

HB 4038 provides necessary authorities, language, and sideboards for program adjustments. It is a “tweak” that finishes work begun last session and improves capacities for programs with demonstrated successes. It reflects an agreed upon approach (between HVEP and SVEP) for connecting unspent reserved BM 96 funds to prioritized policies and programming.

HB 4040 Purpose:

Establishes the Oregon Military Families Education and Workforce Preparedness Scholarship program within the Oregon Military Department for veterans, and adjusts the definition of veteran for the purposes of accessing the scholarship program – ONLY. HB 4040 is a tightly constrained technical adjustment seeking to resolve an emergent (and significant) problem related to recent US Department of Defense deployment “innovations.” This bill would keep faith with our veterans – stabilize our National Guard force structure at a time of increasing domestic as well as overseas demands – and would likely prevent a potential “fight” for scarce General Fund appropriations for similar purposes.

Value:

HB 4040 provides a new tool for keeping our National Guard healthy while keeping faith with the intent/spirit of Ballot Measure 96 passage. Note: an alternative approach seeks to utilize General Funds for a similar purpose – this option provides a more feasible implementation strategy.

Emergency Preparedness Legislation:

HB 4039

Purpose:

Structural mechanism for near and far term resiliency investments through replication of proven (time-tested) revenue development strategies linking capital investment associated with research to patent production – and revenue streams from related innovations. This bill could provide targeted support for statewide, regional, and local economic development priorities.

Value:

HB 4039 replicates an approach utilized by our public colleges and universities for decades. If passed, it could connect **all future** state funded capital investments (exempting public college/university bonds) to patents and a patent acceleration program. It yields a permanent linkage between scarce state capital and shared, benefit – should there be any.

In an era where government should operate “more like a business” – this is a textbook case of “return on investment” strategic planning. The State of Oregon is acting (in many cases) in similar fashion to a higher risk venture capitalist: except, the state does not routinely receive a direct return on investments made (though indirect benefits are often measured).

Given the existing budgetary landscape, this approach represents a “no-new-taxes” methodology for both accomplishing necessary capital improvements for resiliency and economic development throughout the State of Oregon – at minimal cost to the state.

Summary:

These three (3) bills will likely have strong, if not unanimous, committee support. Here’s the bottom line: these bills reflect a bipartisan approach to our challenges in the veterans and emergency preparedness policy arenas, passage would reflect progress for the public interest.